

# Welwyn St Mary's Church of England Primary School



## Parents' Code of Conduct

At Welwyn St Mary's we are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Our parents recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, class teachers and the school community. As a partnership, our parents will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our school. The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our school about the expected conduct. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

At Welwyn St Mary's, we believe it's important to:

- Work in partnership with parents to support their child's learning
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents
- Model appropriate behaviour for our pupils at all times

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and pupils (through our behaviour policy and Home-School Agreement).

This code of conduct aims to help the school work together with parents by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

We use the term 'parents' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders)

As well as following the guidance set out in our Home-School Agreement, we expect parents, carers, and visitors to:

- Respect the caring Christian ethos, vision and values of our school
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together in the best interests of our pupils.
- Treat **all** members of the school community with respect and therefore set a good example to others in their own speech and behaviour.
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
- Correct their own child's behaviour, especially in public, where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour.
- Approach a member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern.
- Avoid using staff as threats to admonish children's behaviour.
- Support the school in modelling our expectations and 3 Golden Rules: **Be Respectful, Be Safe and Aim High.**

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**In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school will not tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:**

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes (or threatens to interfere) with the day-to-day operations within school, a classroom, the school office or any other area of the school (including events on the school grounds and sports events/team matches).
- Using loud, raised voices or offensive language, swearing or displaying temper/aggressive behaviour.
- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of school staff, governor, visitor, fellow parent/carers or pupil.
- Damaging or destroying school property including any items loaned e.g. reading books.
- Abusive or threatening messages sent via text/email/social media/voicemail/phone or video call or other written communication, including those of a harassing or unreasonable nature.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/staff at the school on social media platforms or group chats. Any concerns you may have about the school should be made through the appropriate channels, by speaking to the class teacher or the head teacher so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.
- Online activity that would cause the school, staff, pupils or others distress or bring the school community into disrepute.
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment against your own child on school premises.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of possible negative actions towards their own child. Such may be seen to be an assault or, at the very least, an imbalance of power and may have legal consequences. Please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention.
- Approaching another parent about behaviour incidents relating to their child. Please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention.
- Smoking, vaping or drinking alcohol whilst on school premises (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event).
- Possessing, taking or being impaired by drugs (including legal highs).
- Dogs being brought on to school premises (other than guide dogs).

Should **any** of the above behaviour occur on school premises the school may feel it is necessary to contact the appropriate authorities and if necessary, even ban the offending adult from entering the school grounds. We trust that parents and carers will assist our school with the implementation of this policy and we thank you for your continuing support of our school. Please also make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

**Online safety guide - Summary of key parent/carers responsibilities**

The school provides online safety information for parents/carers, through the website, in newsletters and at events. It is important that parents/carers understand their key role in supporting children to behave appropriately and keep themselves safe online.

The online safety policy, supported by its acceptable use agreements, is intended to protect the interests and safety of the whole school community.

- Parents/carers are required to support their child in understanding and signing the Online Safety Acceptable Use Agreement for pupils.
- Parents/carers may only use personal mobile phones and devices in designated areas of the school unless otherwise informed, e.g. for specific events and activities. Under no circumstance should images be taken at any time on school premises that include anyone other than their own child, unless there is a pre-specified agreement with individuals and

parents/carers. When a parent/carer is on school premises but not in a designated area, their phone/s must be switched off and out of sight.

- Parents/carers should not assume that pupils can bring technological devices to school and should always check the school policy.
- All cyberbullying incidents affecting children in the school should be reported immediately (if the incident involves an indecent image of a child, a report must also be made immediately to the police for your own protection). The school will investigate and respond to all reported cyberbullying incidents, liaising with others where appropriate. No reply should ever be sent to the sender/poster of cyberbullying content. If applicable, block the sender and report abuse to the site. Evidence should be retained and shown in school and/or to the police. Evidence should not be forwarded.
- The school may choose to set up social media sites, blogs or have some other online presence in its own name. Parents/carers, however, do not have the right to set up any site, page, chat group or any other online presence that uses the school name or logo in any form.
- Any parent/carer, distressed or concerned about an aspect of school, should make immediate contact with a member of staff, rather than posting their concerns online or via social networking apps. Parents/carers should not share school-related information or images online or post material that may bring the school or any individual within it into disrepute. Negative postings about the school would impact on the reputation of the whole school community. Parents/carers are encouraged to report breaches, so that we can protect the reputation of the school, staff, pupils and parents/carers.

Please see the full **Online Safety policy** in the policies section on the school website.

### **Inappropriate use of social networking**

Social networking is being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers, school staff, and, in some cases, other parents/pupils. The Governors of Welwyn St Mary's consider this as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated at Welwyn St Mary's is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on social network apps or sites, they will be reported to the appropriate section of the network site.

All social network sites have clear rules about the content, which can be posted and they provide robust mechanisms to report activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately. In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, is the issue of cyber bullying by inappropriate use of social media. We will deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare.

We expect parents and carers to support the school's policy and help prevent their children from signing up to services such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube, whilst they are underage (13+ years in most cases). We also expect that parents will be responsible for closing online accounts that are found to be active for their under-aged children.

We thank you for abiding by this code of conduct in our school. Together, we create a positive and supportive environment, not just for our own child, but for all the children in the school, as well as all those who work, visit, or are associated with our school. Please share this Code of Conduct with anyone dropping off or collecting children at Welwyn St Mary's.

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## **Breaching the code of conduct**

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the code of conduct, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then (in no particular order):

- Speak to the parent about the incident
- Send a warning letter to the parent
- Invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the headteacher
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- Seek advice from the local authority legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent from the school site

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportionate way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the headteacher.

The headteacher will consult the chair of governors before banning a parent from the school site.

The following steps will be taken by the Headteacher and Governors, in order to maintain the 'Aims and Ethos' of our school:

1. Instances of obscene language: The Headteacher will speak to the person concerned either in person, by telephone or by letter.
2. Instances of verbal confrontational behaviour/ re-occurrence of obscene language: The Head teacher will speak to the person concerned either in person or by telephone, followed by a letter which is based on the Children's Services model 'Warning' pro-forma.
3. Instances of re-occurrence of verbal confrontational behaviour/ continued use of obscene language: The Headteacher, and witness (if possible), will speak to the person concerned either in person or by telephone, followed by a final warning letter, which is based on the Children's Services model 'Warning' pro-forma. This letter will be signed by the Headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body.
4. Continued re-occurrence of obscene language and physical or verbal threats or aggression will result in a fixed term exclusion i.e. banning from the school site and events: Letter to be sent which is based on the Children's Services model 'Barring' pro-forma.
5. Instances of repeated unacceptable behaviour following Step 3 will result in an indefinite ban – Letter to be sent based on Children's Services 'Serious Conduct' pro-forma.
6. Instances of criminal behaviour will be reported to the Police.

Advice will be sought from the County Solicitor for Steps 4 and 5. In extreme circumstances, the school reserves the right to fast-track to Steps 4, 5 and 6. Letters of exclusion will be accompanied by a copy of the Complaints Procedure.

If required, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors may impose alternative arrangements or procedures, following incidents that have compromised this responsibility and was contrary to the school's aims in providing an environment in which the pupils, families and staff feel safe.

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